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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000184

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

STATE PASS OES/S
USDA PASS FAS/ITP
USDA PASS APHIS
USDA PASS ICD
USDA PASS FAS/FAA FOR RANDY HAGER
USDA FOR CMP
USDA PASS OA
EMBASSY ROME PASS US MISSION FOR UN, UNMI ROME
USDA PASS TO FAS/DLP
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [EAGR](#) [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN FLU SITREP 1

REF: A. LAGOS 175

[1](#)B. ABUJA 289

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph six.

H5N1 STRAIN OF AVIAN FLU CONFIRMED IN NIGERIA

[1](#)2. (SBU) In a conversation with the Ag Attache, a source in the Agriculture Ministry said the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Office (FAO) reference lab analysis of poultry samples from Kaduna State came back positive for the H5N1 strain of avian influenza (AI). The Ministry of Agriculture held a press conference today to inform the public. USDA APHIS (Dakar) informs us a team from U.N. agencies FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) is en route to Nigeria to support the GON's efforts to investigate AI.

FIRST POULTRY DEATHS REPORTED THREE WEEKS AGO
IN REGIONAL TRADE HUB KANO

[1](#)3. (SBU) Approximately three weeks have elapsed since the deaths of the flocks that tested positive for H5N1 in Nigeria. Per Reftel A, the poultry deaths first occurred in Kaduna from poultry originating in Kano. Kano is the commercial hub of northern Nigeria, with extensive trade -- movement of people, animals and goods -- throughout Nigeria and other parts of West Africa. Given the lack of surveillance infrastructure in Nigeria and the time lag between the poultry deaths and the FAO analysis, it is possible that the disease has spread during these three weeks.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Although the initial confirmation of H5N1 occurred in Kaduna, poultry production in Nigeria is concentrated in southwest states, mostly Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, and Ondo States. As with the farm in Kaduna, most farms in the southwest also have substandard health infrastructures.

EAC CONVENES; POST ACTIONS

[1](#)5. (SBU) AmConsul Lagos EAC convened this morning, and will re-convene 9 February. During the EAC there was significant discussion of a possible request for voluntary authorized departure status for non-essential personnel and dependents. Mission will conduct additional discussions with Washington on this point. The EAC notes H5N1 has been present in Nigeria for at least 3 weeks. Post underscores that while the GON confirmed the presence of H5N1 in Nigeria today, Mission in fact passed tripwire 1.5 (Reftel B) nearly a month ago. The EAC has decided to implement the following steps:

a. Post has prepared a Missionwide warden message for dissemination after the GON's announcement of the presence of H5N1 AI in Nigeria.

b. Post plans to hold a town hall meeting for all American employees, to alert our staff to the confirmation of H5N1 in Nigeria, and to explain preventative measures to avoid transmission of illness.

c. Regional Med Officer is preparing a health packet with information regarding the H5N1 strain of AI, measures to avoid transmission of flu, and guidance on avoiding consumption of poultry and poultry products, for dissemination to mission members, the American school, AMCITS, and other interested parties.

d. Mission will work with the GON's Ministries of Agriculture and Health to facilitate official GON requests for USG assistance to assist in combating H5N1 AI.

ACTION REQUESTS FOR WASHINGTON AGENCIES

16. (SBU) Mission requests the following assistance from USG agencies:

a. USDA dispatch a team of experts to Nigeria to provide technical assistance to the GON in efforts to control the spread of AI within animal populations. The GON currently has no/no capacity to detect highly pathogenic AI in animals. The Minister of Agriculture official expressed strong need for surveillance and laboratory equipment, AI sampling kits, protective gear, and all related supplies.

b. CDC should be prepared to send, on the request of the GON, a team to assist in detection, surveillance and monitoring of possible human AI cases. The GON has no/no capacity to detect highly pathogenic AI in humans.

COMMENT

17. (SBU) The GON is not well prepared to confront an outbreak of AI. We do not know how far H5N1 AI has spread within the poultry industry or wild birds in Nigeria. At this point, it is undetermined whether there have been any cases of H5N1 in humans in Nigeria.

18. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BROWNE